a dispenser that dispenses selected goods from said different types of goods;

a CPU that counts said selected goods dispensed by said dispenser to generate a total number of said selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns;

a machine identifier that identifies said vending machine; and

a transmitter that communicates a signal comprising said machine identifier and said total number of said selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns to a remote processing center; and

said remote processing center receives said signal and calculates the capacity and velocity of each of said different types of goods based on said total number of said selected goods dispensed to determine an optimal configuration of said different types of goods in said plurality of supply columns that would maximize time efficiency between service periods for restocking of said different types of goods.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein said transmitter comprises an antenna for communicating said signal as a radio signal.

4. The system of claim 2, wherein said transmitter is a modem.

5. The system of claim 4, wherein said modem is a radio modem.

6. The system of claim 2, wherein said CPU is electrically coupled to a plurality of monitoring points in said vending machine to provide information regarding the status of said vending machine and report said status into a plurality of messages that is communicated by said transmitter to said remote processing center.

7. The system of claim 2, wherein said vending machine further comprises a power supply that is electrically coupled to said CPU and to said transmitter to provide power to said CPU and said transmitter.

8. The system of claim 6, wherein said plurality of monitoring points is comprised from the group consisting of AC voltage signals, signals from switches, and signals from motors.

9. The system of claim 6, wherein said CPU packages said information regarding the status of said vending machine from said plurality of monitoring points into a uniform data standard.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein said uniform data standard comprises the Direct Exchange Uniform Communication Standard (DEX/UCS).

11. The system of claim 2, wherein said communication between said transmitter and said remote processing center is a one-way communication.

12. The system of claim 2, wherein said remote processing center calculates said velocity by calculating a total velocity of said vending machine by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of said plurality of supply columns vended by time.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein said time is comprised from the group consisting of a day, a week, and a month.

14. The system of claim 12, wherein said calculation of velocity further comprises calculating a product velocity by calculating a product velocity of each of said selected

goods by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of said plurality of supply columns vended by time.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein said time is comprised from the group consisting of a day, a week, and a month.

16. The system of claim 14, wherein said remote processing center further calculates the optimal capacity for each of said plurality of supply columns by dividing each said product velocity for each of said plurality of supply columns by said total velocity and multiplying the result of such calculation times the total capacity of the vending machine.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein said remote processing center further calculates a first FIT comprising the sum of the squares of the difference between the optimal capacity of said different types of goods in each of said plurality of supply columns and an actual product capacity stored in a configuration for said vending machine in memory coupled to said remote processing unit.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein said remote processing center swaps two of said plurality of supply columns containing said different types of goods to form a new configuration of said plurality of supply columns and calculates a new FIT to determine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein said remote processing unit stores said new configuration for said plurality of supply columns to implement during a next service period of said vending machine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

20. The system of claim 18, wherein said remote processing center calculates said new FIT in an iterative manner until the FIT for all of said plurality of supply columns has been calculated to determine an optimal configuration of said different types of goods

in said plurality of supply columns to implement during a next service period of said vending machine.

21. A vending machine system, comprising:

a vending machine, comprising:

a compartment comprising a plurality of supply columns that stores a plurality of different types of goods to be dispensed;

a dispenser that dispenses selected goods from said different types of goods;

a CPU that counts said selected goods dispensed by said dispenser to generate a total number of said selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns;

a machine identifier that identifies said vending machine; and

a means for transmitting a signal comprising said machine identifier and said total number of selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns to a remote processing center; and

said remote processing center comprising a means for determining the optimal configuration of each of said different types of goods in said plurality of supply columns to maximize time efficiency between service periods for restocking of said different types of goods.

22. A system determining the optimal configuration of different types of goods in a plurality of supply columns in a vending machine, comprising a remote processing center that receives a signal comprising a machine identifier and a total number of selected

goods dispensed from the different types goods dispensed by the vending machine and calculates the capacity and velocity of the vending machine to determine the optimal configuration to maximize time efficiency between service periods for restocking of the different types of goods.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein said remote processing center calculates said velocity by calculating a total velocity of the vending machine by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of said plurality of supply columns vended by time.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein said time is comprised from the group consisting of a day, a week, and a month.

25. The system of claim 23, wherein said calculation of velocity further comprises calculating a product velocity by calculating a product velocity of each of said selected goods by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of said plurality of supply columns vended by time.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein said time is comprised from the group consisting of a day, a week, and a month.

27. The system of claim 25, wherein said remote processing center further calculates the optimum capacity for each of said plurality of supply columns by dividing each of said product velocity for each of said plurality of supply columns by said total velocity and multiplying the result of such calculation times the total capacity of the vending machine.

28. The system of claim 27, wherein said remote processing center further calculates a first FIT comprising the sum of the squares of the difference between the optimal capacity of said different types of goods in each of said plurality of supply columns and an actual

product capacity stored in a configuration for said vending machine in memory coupled to said remote processing unit.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein said remote processing center swaps two of said plurality of supply columns containing said different types of goods to form a new configuration of said plurality of supply columns and calculates a new FIT to determine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

30. The system of claim 29, wherein said remote processing unit stores said new configuration for said plurality of supply columns to implement during a next service period of said vending machine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

31. The system of claim 30, wherein said remote processing center calculates said new FIT in an iterative manner until the FIT for all of said plurality of supply columns has been calculated to determine the optimal configuration of said different types of goods in said plurality of supply columns to implement during a next service period of said vending machine.

32. A method for determining the optimal configuration of different types of goods in a plurality of supply columns in a vending machine, comprising the steps of:

storing a configuration of the capacity of the plurality of supply columns and the different types of goods contained in each of the plurality of supply columns for the vending machine;

receiving a signal from the vending machine comprising a machine identifier of the vending machine and the total number of said selected goods dispensed from the vending machine; and

calculating a capacity and velocity of the vending machine to determine the optimal configuration of said different types of goods in the plurality of supply columns to maximize time efficiency between service periods for restocking of the different types of goods.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein said calculating said capacity and velocity comprises calculating a total velocity of said vending machine by dividing the total number of said selected goods for each of said plurality of supply columns vended by time.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein said calculating said capacity and velocity further comprises calculating a product velocity of said selected goods for each of the plurality of supply columns by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of the plurality of supply columns vended by time.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein said calculating said capacity and velocity further comprises calculating the optimal capacity for each of the plurality of supply columns by dividing each said product velocity for each of said plurality of supply columns by said total velocity and multiplying the result of such calculation times the total capacity of the vending machine.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein said calculating said capacity and velocity further comprises calculating a first FIT comprising the sum of the squares of the difference between the optimal capacity of said different types of goods in each of said plurality of supply columns and an actual product capacity stored in a configuration for said vending machine in memory coupled to said remote processing unit.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein said calculating said capacity and velocity further comprises swapping two of the plurality of supply columns containing said

different types of goods to form a new configuration of said plurality of supply columns and calculating a new FIT to determine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein said calculating said capacity and velocity further comprises storing said new configuration for the plurality of supply columns to implement during a next service period of said vending machine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

39. The method of claim 37, wherein said calculating said capacity and velocity further comprises calculating said new FIT in an iterative manner until the FIT for all of the plurality of supply columns have been calculated to determine the optimal configuration of said different types of goods in said plurality of supply columns to implement during a next service period of said vending machine.

40. A method for determining the optimal configuration of different types of goods in a plurality of supply columns in a vending machine, comprising the steps of:

storing a configuration of the capacity of the plurality of supply columns and the different types of goods contained in each of the plurality of supply columns for the vending machine;

dispensing selected goods from the different types of goods from the vending machine;

counting said individual ones of said selected goods dispensed by the vending machine and generating a total number of said selected goods dispensed in response to said dispensing;

transmitting a signal from the vending machine comprising a machine identifier of the vending machine and said total number of said selected goods dispensed from the vending machine;

receiving said signal from the vending machine; and

calculating a capacity and velocity of the vending machine to determine the optimal configuration of the different types of goods in the plurality of supply columns should be changed on a next service period of the vending machine to maximize time efficiency between service periods for restocking of the different types of goods.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein said calculating a capacity and velocity comprises calculating a total velocity of the vending machine by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of the plurality of supply columns vended by time.

42. The method of claim 41, wherein said time is comprised from the group consisting of a day, a week, and a month.

43. The method of claim 40, wherein said calculating a capacity and velocity comprises calculating a product velocity by calculating a product velocity of each of said selected goods by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of the plurality of supply columns vended by time.

44. The method of claim 43, wherein said time is comprised from the group consisting of a day, a week, and a month.

45. The method of claim 43, wherein said calculating a capacity and velocity further comprises calculating a total velocity of each of the plurality of supply columns in said vending machine by dividing the number of selected goods dispensed in each column by time.

46. The method of claim 45, wherein said calculating a capacity and velocity further comprises calculating the optimal capacity for each of the plurality of supply columns by

dividing each said product velocity for each of the plurality of supply columns by said total velocity of said vending machine and multiplying the result of such calculation times the total capacity of said vending machine.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein said calculating a capacity and velocity further comprises calculating a first FIT comprising the sum of the squares of the difference between the optimum capacity of each of the plurality of supply columns of said goods and an actual product capacity stored in a configuration for said vending machine in memory coupled to said remote processing unit.

48. The method of claim 47, wherein said calculating a capacity and velocity further comprises swapping two of the plurality of supply columns containing said different types of goods to form a new configuration of the plurality of supply columns and calculating a new FIT to determine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

49. The method of claim 48, further comprising storing said new configuration for the plurality of supply columns to reconfigure the plurality of supply columns during a next service period of said vending machine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

50. The method of claim 48, wherein said calculating a capacity and velocity further comprises calculating said new FIT in an iterative manner until the FIT for all of the plurality of supply columns have been calculated to determine the optimum configuration of the plurality of supply columns to reconfigure the plurality of supply columns during a next service period of said vending machine.

51. A vending machine system, comprising:

a vending machine, comprising:

a compartment comprising a plurality of supply columns that stores a plurality of different types of goods to be dispensed;

a dispenser that dispenses selected goods from said different types of goods;

a CPU that counts said selected goods dispensed by said dispenser to generate a total number of said selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns;

a machine identifier that identifies said vending machine; and

a transmitter that communicates a signal comprising said machine identifier and said total number of said selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns to a remote processing center; and

said remote processing center receives said signal and calculates the capacity and rate of sale of each of said different types of goods based on said total number of said selected goods dispensed to determine an optimal configuration of said different types of goods in said plurality of supply columns that would maximize time efficiency between service periods for restocking of said different types of goods.

52. The system of claim 51, wherein said transmitter comprises an antenna for communicating said signal as a radio signal.

53. The system of claim 51, wherein said transmitter is a modem.

54. The system of claim 53, wherein said modem is a radio modem.

55. The system of claim 51, wherein said CPU is electrically coupled to a plurality of monitoring points in said vending machine to provide information regarding the status of said vending machine and report said status into a plurality of messages that is communicated by said transmitter to said remote processing center.

56. The system of claim 51, wherein said vending machine further comprises a power supply that is electrically coupled to said CPU and to said transmitter to provide power to said CPU and said transmitter.

57. The system of claim 55, wherein said plurality of monitoring points is comprised from the group consisting of AC voltage signals, signals from switches, and signals from motors.

58. The system of claim 55, wherein said CPU packages said information regarding the status of said vending machine from said plurality of monitoring points into a uniform data standard.

59. The system of claim 58, wherein said uniform data standard comprises the Direct Exchange Uniform Communication Standard (DEX/UCS).

60. The system of claim 51, wherein said communication between said transmitter and said remote processing center is a one-way communication.

61. The system of claim 51, wherein said remote processing center calculates said rate of sale by calculating a total rate of sale of said vending machine by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of said plurality of supply columns vended by time.

62. The system of claim 61, wherein said time is comprised from the group consisting of a day, a week, and a month.

63. The system of claim 61, wherein said calculation of rate of sale further comprises calculating a product rate of sale by calculating a product rate of sale of each of said selected goods by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of said plurality of supply columns vended by time.

64. The system of claim 63, wherein said time is comprised from the group consisting of a day, a week, and a month.

65. The system of claim 63, wherein said remote processing center further calculates the optimal capacity for each of said plurality of supply columns by dividing each said product rate of sale for each of said plurality of supply columns by said total rate of sale and multiplying the result of such calculation times the total capacity of said vending machine.

66. The system of claim 65, wherein said remote processing center further calculates a first FIT comprising the sum of the squares of the difference between the optimal capacity of said different types of goods in each of said plurality of supply columns and an actual product capacity stored in a configuration for said vending machine in memory coupled to said remote processing unit.

67. The system of claim 66, wherein said remote processing center swaps two of said plurality of supply columns containing said different types of goods to form a new configuration of said plurality of supply columns and calculates a new FIT to determine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

68. The system of claim 67, wherein said remote processing unit stores said new configuration for said plurality of supply columns to implement during a next service period of said vending machine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

69. The system of claim 67, wherein said remote processing center calculates said new FIT in an iterative manner until the FIT for all of said plurality of supply columns has been calculated to determine an optimal configuration of said different types of goods in said plurality of supply columns to implement during a next service period of said vending machine.

70. A vending machine system, comprising:

a vending machine, comprising:

a compartment comprising a plurality of supply columns that stores a plurality of different types of goods to be dispensed;

a dispenser that dispenses selected goods from said different types of goods;

a CPU that counts said selected goods dispensed by said dispenser to generate a total number of said selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns;

a machine identifier that identifies said vending machine; and

a means for transmitting a signal comprising said machine identifier and said total number of selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns to a remote processing center; and

said remote processing center comprising a means for determining the optimal configuration of each of said different types of goods in said plurality of supply columns to maximize time efficiency between service periods for restocking of said different types of goods.

71. A system determining the optimal configuration of different types of goods in a plurality of supply columns in a vending machine, comprising a remote processing center that receives a signal comprising a machine identifier and a total number of selected goods dispensed from the different types goods dispensed by the vending machine and calculates the capacity and rate of sale of the vending machine to determine the optimal configuration to maximize time efficiency between service periods for restocking of the different types of goods.

72. The system of claim 71, wherein said remote processing center calculates said rate of sale by calculating a total rate of sale of the vending machine by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of said plurality of supply columns vended by time.

73. The system of claim 72, wherein said time is comprised from the group consisting of a day, a week, and a month.

74. The system of claim 72, wherein said calculation of rate of sale further comprises calculating a product rate of sale by calculating a product rate of sale of each of said selected goods by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of said plurality of supply columns vended by time.

75. The system of claim 74, wherein said time is comprised from the group consisting of a day, a week, and a month.

76. The system of claim 74, wherein said remote processing center further calculates the optimum capacity for each of said plurality of supply columns by dividing each said product rate of sale for each of said plurality of supply columns by said total rate of sale and multiplying the result of such calculation times the total capacity of the vending machine.

77. The system of claim 76, wherein said remote processing center further calculates a first FIT comprising the sum of the squares of the difference between the optimal capacity of said different types of goods in each of said plurality of supply columns and an actual product capacity stored in a configuration for said vending machine in memory coupled to said remote processing unit.

78. The system of claim 77, wherein said remote processing center swaps two of said plurality of supply columns containing said different types of goods to form a new configuration of said plurality of supply columns and calculates a new FIT to determine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

79. The system of claim 78, wherein said remote processing unit stores said new configuration for said plurality of supply columns to implement during a next service period of said vending machine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

80. The system of claim 79, wherein said remote processing center calculates said new FIT in an iterative manner until the FIT for all of said plurality of supply columns has been calculated to determine the optimal configuration of said different types of goods in said plurality of supply columns to implement during a next service period of said vending machine.

81. A method for determining the optimal configuration of different types of goods in a plurality of supply columns in a vending machine, comprising the steps of:

storing a configuration of the capacity of the plurality of supply columns and the different types of goods contained in each of the plurality of supply columns for the vending machine;

receiving a signal from the vending machine comprising a machine identifier of the vending machine and the total number of said selected goods dispensed from the vending machine; and

calculating a capacity and rate of sale of the vending machine to determine the optimal configuration of said different types of goods in the plurality of supply columns to maximize time efficiency between service periods for restocking of the different types of goods.

82. The method of claim 81, wherein said calculating said capacity and rate of sale comprises calculating a total rate of sale of said vending machine by dividing the total number of said selected goods for each of said plurality of supply columns vended by time.

83. The method of claim 82, wherein said calculating said capacity and rate of sale further comprises calculating a product rate of sale of said selected goods for each of the plurality of supply columns by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of the plurality of supply columns vended by time.

84. The method of claim 83, wherein said calculating said capacity and rate of sale further comprises calculating the optimal capacity for each of the plurality of supply columns by dividing each said product rate of sale for each of said plurality of supply columns by said total rate of sale and multiplying the result of such calculation times the total capacity of the vending machine.

85. The method of claim 84, wherein said calculating said capacity and rate of sale further comprises calculating a first FIT comprising the sum of the squares of the difference between the optimal capacity of said different types of goods in each of said plurality of supply columns and an actual product capacity stored in a configuration for said vending machine in memory coupled to said remote processing unit.

86. The method of claim 85, wherein said calculating said capacity and rate of sale further comprises swapping two of the plurality of supply columns containing said different types of goods to form a new configuration of said plurality of supply columns and calculating a new FIT to determine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

87. The method of claim 86, wherein said calculating said capacity and rate of sale further comprises storing said new configuration for the plurality of supply columns to implement during a next service period of said vending machine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

88. The method of claim 86, wherein said calculating said capacity and rate of sale further comprises calculating said new FIT in an iterative manner until the FIT for all of the plurality of supply columns has been calculated to determine the optimal configuration of said different types of goods in said plurality of supply columns to implement during a next service period of said vending machine.

89. A method for determining the optimal configuration of different types of goods in a plurality of supply columns in a vending machine, comprising the steps of:

storing a configuration of the capacity of the plurality of supply columns and the different types of goods contained in each of the plurality of supply columns for the vending machine;

dispensing selected goods from the different types of goods from the vending machine;

counting said individual ones of said selected goods dispensed by the vending machine and generating a total number of said selected goods dispensed in response to said dispensing;

transmitting a signal from the vending machine comprising a machine identifier of the vending machine and said total number of said selected goods dispensed from the vending machine;

receiving said signal from the vending machine; and

calculating a capacity and rate of sale of the vending machine to determine the optimal configuration of the different types of goods in the plurality of supply columns should be changed on a next service period of the vending machine to maximize time efficiency between service periods for restocking of the different types of goods.

90. The method of claim 89, wherein said calculating a capacity and rate of sale comprises calculating a total rate of sale of the vending machine by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of the plurality of supply columns vended by time.

91. The method of claim 90, wherein said time is comprised from the group consisting of a day, a week, and a month.

92. The method of claim 89, wherein said calculating a capacity and rate of sale comprises calculating a product rate of sale by calculating a product rate of sale of each of said selected goods by dividing said total number of said selected goods for each of the plurality of supply columns vended by time.

93. The method of claim 92, wherein said time is comprised from the group consisting of a day, a week, and a month.

94. The method of claim 92, wherein said calculating a capacity and rate of sale further comprises calculating a total velocity of each of the plurality of supply columns in

said vending machine by dividing the number of selected goods dispensed in each column by time.

95. The method of claim 94, wherein said calculating a capacity and rate of sale further comprises calculating the optimal capacity for each of the plurality of supply columns by dividing each said product rate of sale for each of the plurality of supply columns by said total rate of sale of said vending machine and multiplying the result of such calculation times the total capacity of the vending machine.

96. The method of claim 95, wherein said calculating a capacity and rate of sale further comprises calculating a first FIT comprising the sum of the squares of the difference between the optimum capacity of each of the plurality of supply columns of said goods and an actual product capacity stored in a configuration for said vending machine in memory coupled to said remote processing unit.

97. The method of claim 96, wherein said calculating a capacity and rate of sale further comprises swapping two of the plurality of supply columns containing said different types of goods to form a new configuration of the plurality of supply columns and calculating a new FIT to determine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

98. The method of claim 97, further comprises storing said new configuration for the plurality of supply columns to reconfigure the plurality of supply columns during a next service period of said vending machine if said new FIT is smaller than said first FIT.

99. The method of claim 97, wherein said calculating a capacity and rate of sale further comprises calculating said new FIT in an iterative manner until the FIT for all of the plurality of supply columns has been calculated to determine the optimum configuration of the plurality of supply columns to reconfigure the plurality of supply columns during a next service period of said vending machine.

100. A vending machine system, comprising:

a vending machine, comprising:

a compartment comprising a plurality of supply columns that stores a plurality of different types of goods to be dispensed;

a dispenser that dispenses selected goods from said different types of goods;

a CPU that counts said selected goods dispensed by said dispenser to generate a total number of said selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns;

a machine identifier that identifies said vending machine; and

a transmitter that communicates a signal comprising said machine identifier and said total number of said selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns to a remote processing center; and

said remote processing center receives said signal and generates inventory levels for each of said different types of goods in the vending machine.

101. The system of claim 100, wherein said remote processing center further comprises a memory to store said inventory level.

102. The system of claim 101, wherein said remote processing center generates a current inventory status by subtracting said total number of selected goods dispensed from said inventory levels for each of said different types of goods previously stored in memory to formulate updated inventory levels for each of said different type of goods.

103. The system of claim 102, wherein said remote processing center calculates sales information for each of said different types of goods based on said inventory levels.

104. The system of claim 100, wherein said remote processing center calculates sales information for each of said different types of goods based on said inventory levels.

105. The system of claim 102, wherein said remote processing center calculates said sales information for each of said different types of goods by individually multiplying the current inventory status for each of said different types of goods by the price each of said different types of goods respectively.

106. A vending machine system, comprising:

a vending machine, comprising:

a compartment comprising a plurality of supply columns that stores a plurality of different types of goods to be dispensed;

a dispenser that dispenses selected goods from said different types of goods;

a CPU that counts said selected goods dispensed by said dispenser to generate a total number of said selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns;

a machine identifier that identifies said vending machine; and

a means for transmitting a signal comprising said machine identifier and said total number of selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns to a remote processing center; and

said remote processing center comprising a means for said remote processing center generating inventory levels for each of said different types of goods in the vending machine.

107. A system determining the optimal configuration of different types of goods in a plurality of supply columns in a vending machine, comprising a remote processing center that receives a signal comprising a machine identifier and a total number of selected goods dispensed from the different types goods dispensed by the vending and generates inventory levels for each of said different types of goods in the vending machine.

108. The system of claim 107, wherein said remote processing center further comprises a memory to store said inventory level.

109. The system of claim 108, wherein said remote processing center generates a current inventory status by subtracting said total number of selected goods dispensed from said inventory levels for each of the different types of goods previously stored in memory to formulate updated inventory levels for each of the different type of goods.

110. The system of claim 109, wherein said remote processing center calculates sales information for each of the different types of goods based on said inventory levels.

111. The system of claim 107, wherein said remote processing center calculates sales information for each of the different types of goods based on said inventory levels.

112. The system of claim 109, wherein said remote processing center calculates said sales information for each of the different types of goods by individually multiplying the current inventory status for each of the different types of goods by the price of each of the different types of goods respectively.

113. A method for determining the optimal configuration of different types of goods in a plurality of supply columns in a vending machine, comprising the steps of:

storing a configuration of the capacity of the plurality of supply columns and the different types of goods contained in each of the plurality of supply columns for the vending machine;

receiving a signal from the vending machine comprising a machine identifier of the vending machine and the total number of said selected goods dispensed from the vending machine; and

generating inventory levels for each of said different types of goods in the vending machine.

114. The method of claim 113, wherein said generating inventory levels comprises a memory to store said inventory level.

115. The method of claim 114, wherein said generating inventory levels further comprises generating a current inventory status by subtracting said total number of selected goods dispensed from said inventory levels for each of the different types of goods previously stored in said memory to formulate updated inventory levels for each of the different type of goods.

116. The method of claim 115, wherein said generating inventory levels further comprises calculating sales information for each of the different types of goods based on said inventory levels.

117. The method of claim 113, wherein said generating inventory levels further comprises calculating sales information for each of the different types of goods based on said inventory levels.

118. The method of claim 115, wherein said generating inventory levels further comprises calculating said sales information for each of the different types of goods by individually multiplying the current inventory status for each of the different types of goods by the price each of the different types of goods respectively.

119. A method for determining the optimal configuration of different types of goods in a plurality of supply columns in a vending machine, comprising the steps of:

storing a configuration of the capacity of the plurality of supply columns and the different types of goods contained in each of the plurality of supply columns for the vending machine;

dispensing selected goods from the different types of goods from the vending machine;

counting individual ones of said selected goods dispensed by the vending machine and generating a total number of said selected goods dispensed in response to said dispensing;

transmitting a signal from the vending machine comprising a machine identifier of the vending machine and said total number of said selected goods dispensed from the vending machine;

receiving said signal from the vending machine; and

generating inventory levels for each of said different types of goods in the vending machine.

120. The method of claim 119, wherein said generating inventory levels comprises a memory to store said inventory level.

121. The method of claim 120, wherein said generating inventory levels further comprises generating a current inventory status by subtracting said total number of selected goods dispensed from said inventory levels for each of the different types of goods previously stored in memory to formulate updated inventory levels for each of the different type of goods.

122. The method of claim 121, wherein said generating inventory levels further comprises calculating sales information for each of the different types of goods based on said inventory levels.

123. The method of claim 122, wherein said generating inventory levels further comprises calculating sales information for each of the different types of goods based on said inventory levels.

124. The method of claim 121, wherein said generating inventory levels further comprises calculating said sales information for each of the different types of goods by individually multiplying the current inventory status for each of the different types of goods by the price each of the different types of goods respectively.

125. An apparatus for receiving a signal comprising a machine identifier and a total number of said selected goods dispensed for each of said plurality of supply columns in a vending machine, comprising:

a remote processing center that receives the signal;

said remote processing center coupled to a memory that contains at least one user parameter for the vending machine wherein said remote processing center is adapted to access said at least one user parameter for the vending machine.

126. The apparatus of claim 125, wherein said remote processing center accesses said at least one user parameter for the vending machine based on the machine identifier of the vending machine.

127. The apparatus of claim 125, wherein said at least one user parameter is comprised from the group consisting of a minimum threshold capacity of the vending machine, a maximum product capacity of the vending machine, a number of supply columns in the vending machine, a capacity of each of the supply columns in the vending machine; a product code of the goods stored in the vending machine, and an associated product name for the goods stored in the vending machine.

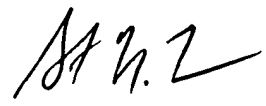
128. The apparatus of claim 125, wherein said remote processing center uses said at least one user parameter is input into a report generated by said remote processing center.

129. The apparatus of claim 128, wherein said remote processing center displays said report.

130. The apparatus of claim 125, wherein said remote processing center displays said at least one user parameter.

Respectfully submitted,

WITHROW & TERRANOVA, PLLC

By: 

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Date: June 3, 2002
Attorney Docket No.: 4763-013B

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT HIS DOCUMENT IS BEING DEPOSITED WITH THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE AS FIRST-CLASS MAIL, IN AN ENVELOPE ADDRESSED TO: **COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231**, ON 6-3-02 (Date of Deposit)

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